

JULY, 1868.

The monthly evening meeting of the Fellows was held on Tuesday, the 14th July, His Excellency Colonel Gore Browne, President, in the chair.

The Secretary, Dr. Agnew, laid on the table the following returns:—

1. Visitors to Museum, during June, 374.
2. Ditto to Gardens during June, 672.
3. Plants received at Gardens:—From Mr. J. Harris, Melbourne, 36 plants. From Sydney Botanic Gardens, 36 plants. From Rev. G. Clarke, two cases of New Zealand Ferns.
4. Plants, &c., sent from Gardens:—To Messrs. Taylor and Sangster, Melbourne, one parcel of Bulbs.
5. Times of leafing, &c., of a few standard plants in Botanic Gardens.
6. Books and periodicals received.
7. Presentations to Museum.

Meteorological Returns.

1. Hobart Town, from F. Abbott, Esq.—Table and summary for June.
2. Port Arthur, from J. Boyd, Esq.—Table for May.
3. Westbury, from F. Belstead, Esq.—Table for June.
4. Tamar Heads, from R. Henry, Esq.—Tables for May and June.
5. Sydney, New South Wales, from G. R. Smalley, Esq., Government Observer, printed tables for March, April, and May.

Dr. Agnew read a letter from the Private Secretary enclosing a copy of a despatch received by His Excellency the Governor from the Duke of Buckingham, with a copy of "The Early Days of the Prince Consort," and one of "Leaves from the Journal of our Life in the Highlands," presented to the Society by Her Majesty the Queen.

[For these valuable presents a special letter of thanks has been sent through His Excellency, the President, for the purpose of being laid before Her Majesty.]

The presentations to the Museum were as follows:—

1. From Dr. Huston. Cap formed from husk of cocoanut, from Panama.
2. From Miss Fenton. A young Diamond Snake.
3. From Mr. E. Oldham. A halfpenny, William and Mary, and a half-farthing, George IV.
4. A Portuguese coin, 1795, from Mr. Bellette.
5. An Eagle, from Mr. Collis, of Recherche Bay, per Mr. Gould.
6. From Mr. W. Knight. A silver coin.
7. From Mr. John Buckland. Two English perch.
8. Dr. Agnew, model of a moccasin by Mr. Beaumont.

After showing by the model how the moccasin was constructed, Dr. Agnew remarked he presented it as a sort of memento of the early days of the colony. At that period it was commonly used by bush travellers, and was a most comfortable covering for the feet. It was made from the thick part of the tail of the kangaroo, the hard and callous under surface of which formed the sole. Mr. Beaumont could speak from long experience as to the comfort and convenience of moccasins, having on several occasions, before the existence of a road, walked in them across the island as far as Launceston, and over also to Macquarie Harbor (in 1817) where he had been sent in order to test, by examination of the bush, if it were possible that prisoners could escape thence by land.

The Secretary reported the presentation to the Society of Mr. Gerard Krefft's pamphlet on the Fauna of Tasmania, and read several extracts from it.

Mr. Allport, after complimenting Mr. Krefft on his valuable contribution

to the Fauna of Tasmania, read a paper in reply to some of his observations, especially (amongst other matters) in reference to the existence of two species of Thylacine. Mr. Allport thinks the evidence is not conclusive as to the existence of more than one.

Mr. Gould agreed with Mr. Allport's remarks as to the unity of species of the so called "Bull Dog" and "Greyhound" Thylacine. As to the Eagle (presentation No. 5) he coincided with Mr. Allport in considering it a new species. He had never seen one like it till last year, when he saw several pairs at Port Davey, which appeared to differ from those with which he was already acquainted, but unfortunately he was not then able to secure one as a specimen.

Mr. Dobson noticed that the Whip Snake was said by Mr. Krefft to be innoxious, and wished to know if that was the case.

Mr. Allport said, although venomous, it was practically almost harmless, on account of the small size of the mouth. It could not possibly inflict a wound through clothes.

Dr. Agnew stated he had dissected the heads of several of these snakes, and found that the poison gland was very large for the size of the animal. He did not think it safe therefore to look upon it as tolerably harmless, as the bite on some exposed part of the body such as the finger, especially in the case of children, might be attended by serious symptoms.

Mr. Gould observed that in addition to those catalogued, there was also the so-called Green Snake in the colony.

Mr. Graves corroborated Mr. Gould's statement, and adduced two instances where this snake had come under his immediate notice.

Mr. Allport after such evidence could scarcely doubt we had a Green Snake, but he had never seen one, and would be glad to have it known that he would give five pounds for a specimen. On this subject, too, he might say he would gladly give the same amount for any of our snakes measuring six feet or upwards.

Mr. E. D. Swan, in addition to the birds enumerated by Mr. Krefft, mentioned he had seen of late years in the vicinity of the domain, and elsewhere numerous specimens of the *Eptianura Albifrons*.

Mr. Barnard read a paper on the Esparto or, Spanish Grass, in reference to its value for the manufacture of paper. He also gave some details as to the expense of erecting a paper mill, and alluded to the advantages to the community of the establishment of this and other manufactures.

Mr. Gould asked if calcareous soils, as stated in the paper, were absolutely necessary to the growth of the Esparto? If it grew on silicious soils, it would in all probability be a great boon to the colony, as most of our poor and waste lands were silicious, but if on the contrary it required a calcareous soil its benefit would be but limited.

Mr. Barnard replied that the *Economist* paper, the source whence he obtained his information, certainly spoke of calcareous or marly soils only.

Mr. Davies was glad to see so important a subject brought under notice, but would have been still more so had Mr. Barnard been able to lay before them more full and precise information. He had seen a very good account of the matter in *Lloyd's Newspaper* some time ago, but although desirous to refer to it on a subsequent occasion, he had been unable to do so, the paper having been mislaid. His impression, however, was that the Esparto Grass was said to grow well on poor silicious soils, and if so, it would prove to be a great boon to the colony, as said by Mr. Gould.

Colonel Crawford had also read on this subject. The grass was found on the coast of Barcelona, and he presumed therefore the soil was sandy. It was certainly poor and waste as the sailors used to go ashore and cut it without being interfered with.

Mr. Troup, D.A.C.G., said the soil along the coast of Barcelona, as in other parts of Spain, was very dry, and therefore in some degree perhaps different from that in Tasmania. Still, he knew it was very barren and useless, probably silicious and certainly not calcareous, or it would have been turned to some profitable use. He therefore thought our waste silicious lands would probably be very suitable for the Esparto.

Mr. Davies thought it was the duty of the Society to make further enquiries as to the product, the introduction of which might be of great benefit to the colony.

Mr. Gould agreed with Mr. Davies, and suggested that Mr. Barnard should be requested to obtain further information on the subject, which Mr. Barnard said he would be happy to do.

Mr. W. L. Dobson proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Krefft for the early copy of his very interesting pamphlet, and to the gentlemen who had read such interesting papers.

Mr. Stephens seconded the motion which was carried: and the votes of thanks conveyed to the gentlemen present by His Excellency.

A vote of thanks was also accorded to the donors of presentations.

PRESENTATION TO DR. AGNEW.

His Excellency the Governor said: Gentlemen, the ordinary business of the meeting being over, I am delighted to have the opportunity of closing it in a manner as agreeable to myself, as I believe it will be to every one present. I have been requested to convey to our Honorary Secretary a small token of the approbation of the Fellows, of the services which he has generally rendered to the society, and in recognition of his constant attention and care since he first entered upon the duties of the office. (Cheers.) All that has been done, all the valuable statistics that are laid upon the table every month, can only be collected, and arranged by much labor, which occupies time, and time which is extremely valuable to a man so constantly occupied as the Hon. Secretary is in the management of his own private affairs. Before Dr. Agnew undertook the office of Secretary, I believe these duties were performed by a paid officer, but that cost the society a very considerable amount, and our funds becoming diminished, we should have been unable to go on, had not Dr. Agnew come forward and undertaken the office. He had now performed the duty of the secretaryship for a period of seven years without remuneration, and it is known to all the Fellows, with how much care, attention, and courtesy he has performed it. I believe he enjoys the esteem and regard of all the members of the Society. I have much pleasure in handing to you, Dr. Agnew, a draft for £65, on behalf of the Fellows of this society, with a request that you will purchase a piece of plate, whatever you may like best, and that you will have engraved upon it the following inscription:—"Presented by the Fellows of the Royal Society of Tasmania, to James Wilson Agnew, Esq., M.D., as a token of their regard, and a mark of their appreciation of the valuable services rendered by him as Honorary Secretary of the Society. July, 1868.

His Excellency handed the cheque to Dr. Agnew amid cheers.

Dr. Agnew said: Your Excellency and Fellows of the Royal Society,—Even had I been more used than I am to speak in public I could scarcely have trusted myself to do so on such an occasion, and therefore hope you will excuse me if I read the few words which I have to say. The compliment which has just been conferred upon me is so great and so unexpected that I need not attempt to express the feelings, partly of pride, partly of misgiving which it has excited. To have gained the goodwill or approbation of a large and intellectual portion of his fellow citizens must be to any one an unceasing source of satisfaction, and I can therefore truly say that nothing in public life has ever given me higher plea-

sure and gratification than your presentation of this splendid testimonial. I feel painfully, however, that my actual services have fallen far short of the value you have kindly put upon them, and, although I have at all times endeavoured to do what I could to promote the best interests of this society, and to keep up friendly relations with scientific bodies of a similar character in various parts of the world, I seem to have done so little, that I am conscious I owe the present compliment more to your kindness, than to any desert of mine. But if I have not been able to do as much as I could have desired, it has never, I think, been from want of will, and unless unforeseen circumstances arise to render it impossible, I shall still feel great pleasure in acting as heretofore, until, at least, the services of some more efficient volunteer may be secured. I now beg to return my warmest thanks to all those who have interested themselves in the present movement. With the sum now placed at my disposal I shall, agreeably to your request, procure some article of value, on which I shall feel great pride in having engraved the inscription you have provided; and, I need scarcely add, in future years I shall rarely look upon it without being reminded of the present meeting, and of many a pleasant hour devoted to the service of the Royal Society of Tasmania.

The proceedings then terminated.